



Appendix F

LETTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

MARCH 2015

APPENDIX E. LETTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

This Appendix contains letters and resolutions received throughout the duration of the State Rail Plan project. Letters include:

- Albert Lea Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Albert Lea Economic Development Agency
- Albert Lea – Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce
- All Aboard Minnesota
- Bike Northfield
- Bridgewater Township
- Carleton College
- Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance
- City of Albert Lea
- City of Arlington
- City of Austin
- City of Dundas
- City of Faribault
- City of Farmington
- City of Lonsdale
- City of Mankato
- City of Minneapolis
- City of Morton
- City of Northfield
- City of Northfield Economic Development Authority
- City of Owatonna
- City of Richfield
- City of Rosemount
- City of St. Louis Park

- City of Saint Paul
- City of Savage
- City of Shakopee
- City of Sleepy Eye
- City of Springfield
- City of Tracy
- City of Waseca
- City of Winona
- Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority
- Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce
- Farmers Union Industries
- Freeborn County
- Friends of the Mill Towns State Trail
- Goodhue County
- Harvest Land Cooperative
- Heartland Corn Products
- Meadowland Farmers Coop
- Minnesota Farm Bureau
- Minnesota State Legislators David Bly, Frank Hornstein, Alice Hausman, Rick Hanson, Tina Liebling, Dan Sparks, Clark Johnson, and John Considine
- Minnesota Valley Regional Rail Authority
- Northfield Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Northfield Hospital and Clinics
- Northfield Public Schools
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
- Redwood Area Development Corporation
- Renville County

- Renville County HRA/EDA
- Rice County Board of Commissioners
- Saint Cloud Area Planning Organization
- Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and Tribal Chairman Charlie Vig
- Sibley County
- South Central Grain and Energy
- St. Croix Valley Rail Group
- St. Olaf College
- Steele County Board of Commissioners
- Stepsaver, Inc.
- UFC
- U.S. Highway 169 Corridor Coalition
- West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition

From: Bruce Anderson <bruce@sustainablecommunitysolutions.com>
Date: January 12, 2015 at 8:55:14 PM CST
To: <Dave.Christianson@state.mn.us>
Cc: <Daniel.Krom@state.mn.us>
Subject: Letter of support for the South Central Inter-City Regional Passenger Rail Project
Reply-To: <bruce@sustainablecommunitysolutions.com>

To the MnDOT Planning Division:

BikeNorthfield supports upgrading the status for Northfield in the 2009 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan from Tier II to the highest priority category, Tier I.

The benefits to bicyclists would include access from Northfield to the extensive and interconnected system of bike trails in the Twin Cities. Southbound service would open Northfield area paved trails, designated off-road areas and the gravel and paved grid based on section lines that cover our region. With a rail corridor continuing south to Faribault and Owatonna as well as east to Rochester these benefits both directions would be expanded dramatically linking urban dwellers to the growing trail system famous for its rural charm.

We strongly encourage MnDOT to support immediate elevation from Tier II to Tier I in the State Rail Plan for restored regional passenger rail service from south central Minnesota on existing rail lines through Northfield.

BikeNorthfield Steering Committee, unanimously adopted 12/18/14
Signed Bruce Anderson, Chairman

Comment: Minnesota Farm Bureau Input To Scoping Process For 2015 Minnesota Rail Plan

Minnesota Farm Bureau is very interested in resolving the on-going and serious challenges of improved rail service in our state. As the circumstances of the past year have demonstrated through the failures in rail service to meet the needs of agricultural commodity shipments in a timely and predictable fashion we consider improvements as a high priority.

The comprehensive planning process considered for the update of the 2010 Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan should focus on the role of how a statewide plan of this nature will translate to improved conditions. Planning for the sake of planning should be avoided and perhaps instead of a 200-plus document, a clearer and definitive game plan for what will be priority actions should be the outcome.

Minnesota Farm Bureau's policy views for these priorities match some of the elements included in the 2010 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. We believe that fewer bullet items and a greater sense of making priorities be priorities (versus a longer list of items) would make for a better plan.

Beyond a plan that seems more inclined to pursue federal funding as an objective, we suggest that the new plan speak to the role that Minnesota can play in effectively working with the national Surface Transportation Board to facilitate improved reliability for meeting the needs of Minnesota rail shippers.

System Improvements â We agree that there should be continued improvements to the condition and capacity of Minnesota's railroads to accommodate existing and future demand. As noted, the current system for freight is not meeting existing demands and needs improvement. The Minnesota 2015 Rail Plan should give attention to expansion and upgrades of existing shortline and regional railroads to provide better service options for farm shippers.

Resolution of Bottlenecks â We agree that more capacity can be achieved through determining bottlenecks in the system and focusing priority attention for addressing the requirements of necessary improvements.

Safety â We agree that a number of safety actions should be incorporated into the plans for the future. Our members have identified a need for requiring Department of Transportation reflective tape to be placed on the sides of all railcars (as is the case with semi-trailers). Minnesota Farm Bureau policy also spells out support for efforts to improve safety at railroad crossings and maintenance of the right of ways to be free of vegetation and things which obstruct the visibility of trains.

Priority On Freight â The most effective role rail service can provide is for the transportation of bulk freight shipments. We recognize that intermodal systems offer positive opportunity for interconnections and enhancement of transportation methods that combine a variety of advantages. It would be good to up-grade and include the expansion of intermodal service access options throughout the state, as covered in the 2010 Plan.

Discontinue High Speed Rail In The Plan â While concentrating on what should be in the 2015 Minnesota Comprehensive Rail Plan, we also believe that there should not be any more attention given to the concept of a high-speed, passenger-only rail system. Minnesota Farm Bureau policy minces no

words in placing our organization strongly in opposition to the ZipRail project and calls for an end to all public funding for this effort, including studies.

The Plan for 2015 needs to direct limited resources for the greatest benefit of all Minnesota. Giving rail freight priority attention matches the needs for Minnesotans with the best effective use of rail. We look for the next phases of this planning process to provide a detailed overview which documents show a passenger-only rail system will be capable of being financially solvent without on-going taxpayer funding, covering all phases of implementation (pre-construction, construction and future operations).

If the Plan for 2015 ignores our request for discontinuing Minnesota taxpayers involvement in continued funding into high-speed rail, we request a complete economic analysis presented to detail what funding has been spent so far, anticipation for all future public funding which will be required and the manner in which this investment will be returned as benefits for all Minnesota taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Kevin Paap, President
Minnesota Farm Bureau

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